REFLECTION,

An Elegy,

OCCASIONED BY A VISIT TO COSSEY,

DEDICATED TO

SIR WILLIAM JERNINGHAM, BART.

WITH

COLIN,

A Dirge.

——————To the studious mind
The vale of solitude is world enough;
A world of many *pleasures*, many friends,
Of bustle, and resort without fatigue.

HURDIS' FAVORITE VILLAGE.

Norwich:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. PAYNE,
OPPOSITE THE HALL, MARKET-PLACE;
To be had of W. Booth, Market-Place; Gedge, Bury; and Downes, Yarmouth;
At London, of West and Hughes, Pater-noster-Row; Wright, Piccadilly; Hookham and
Carpenter, Bond-Street, and Vernor and Hood, in the Poultry.
And all other Booksellers.

Vet. A5 c. 993

DEDICATION.

To Sir William Jerningham, Bart.

SIR,

BE not alarmed, that your Name precedes the subsequent Address. It would ill become me to approach the altar of Taste with the incense of adulation;—I have seen too much of the world, and know how to appreciate its opinion too well, to sacrifice mental integrity for the purpose of obtaining a little evanescent celebrity; and you, Sir, have too much philosophical acumen to mistake the semblance *of truth for the truth itself.*

In the present convulsed state of Europe, when every man affects to be a patriot, and every patriot fancies himself a politician, the Poet is left to become his own Patron, and the Muse, her own Admirer; hence, like

Arachne in the Forest, they may run round the web of their own spinning, and be starved to death in surveying the works of their own ingenuity. This is not the language of disappointment, as applicable to myself, but of painful observation on the fate of others.—I have before appeared at the tribunal of the public, and its awful fiat has more than once gratified my most sanguine wishes; nevertheless, in spite of the vanity and confidence which success naturally inspires, I now *approach it with fear and trembling.*

Poetry does not carry to the eye of every man the same fascinating appearance,—its best performance is but an imitative species of excellence; and those who, like yourself, can contemplate the infinite variety in the features of nature, with the nicest discrimination, will consequently prefer her living beauties to the most animated description of the pen or the pencil. The Taste exemplified in the disposition of the spot dignified by your residence, is too obvious to every visitor to require a particular delineation. Yes, Sir, insensible indeed must be the heart of that man *who can wander through the shades of Cossey, where Genius sits enthroned on the bosom of Nature, and not feel*

a rapturous sensation: he may boast of his retinue and his treasure, and roll round the vortex of fashion in his chariot of gold; but in the hour of retrospection, when the pleasures of dissipation shall be weighed in the balance and found wanting,—he will then lack the consolation experienced by those whose minds have been improved and expanded by the study of nature.

That you and your's may long live to enjoy the beauties of that extensive scenery which your inventive genius has called into existence, is the wish, Sir, of

Your Obliged,

And Obedient Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

NORWICH, July 12, 1800.

REFLECTION,

AN ELEGY.

"WHILST some affect the Sun, and some the shade,"
Those to enjoy, and these to shun the heat;
Let me, with no unhallow'd steps, invade—
At once the Muses and the Graces' seat.

'Twas here, the fav'rite* of the far-fam'd Nine,
His bosom teeming with Promethean fire,
Bath'd, with affection's tear, a Parent's shrine,
And swept† with filial fervency the lyre.

* Edward Jerningham, Esq.—† *Vide*—his beautiful lines written in the Album at Cossey and inserted in his 3d. volume of Poems.

Thrice blest the Bard, in adverse fortune's spite,
Who haply boasts the delegated pow'r
To catch the light-wing'd moments in their flight,
And stamp importance on the passing hour.

'Tis his to cherish, 'midst the storms of strife,
The half-blown virtues of the human mind,—
Pore o'er the living history of life,
And snatch a transport of the purest kind.

And yet the world, and all the world contains,
Are only meteors in his mind's keen eye;
He counts of realms where Spring for ever reigns,
And low'ring tempests never cloud the sky.

Has then Creation spread her charms in vain—
O'er the wide surface of this circling Ball?
Ah! no; for these, he pours the grateful strain,
And owns a ruling providence in all.

Yes, tho' full oft th' impassion'd Bard ascends—
Beyond the summit of the star-clad sky;
Anon, we find, to humbler scenes he bends,
And o'er creation flings a phrenzied eye.

And where, amidst her ample round, appears
A spot, with purer, happier taste design'd
Than COSSEY,—whose enamell'd bosom bears
A living transcript of the Owner's mind.

Here, Genius, long enamour'd of the place,
Flung Beauty's zone round playful Nature's stole,
And gave, till then unknown, a nameless grace,
That laps in boundless extacy the soul.

Hence, all that vast variety is seen
Which mocks the Poet's and the Painter's skill;—
Lawns ever verdant, trees for ever green,
The Tower-crown'd mountain, and the murm'ring rill.

Here shall no fretful Politician frame
New conquests for aspiring chiefs to gain,
Or add fresh fuel to the fatal flame,
That marks too deeply Discord's dreadful reign;

No love-lorn maiden thro' the twilight grove,
While sombre sadness wraps her passive mind,
In broken accents talk of perjur'd love,
And give her sorrows to the fleeting wind.

But here shall meek philosophy retire—
To trace, from things minute, the first Great Cause,
Warm'd by a spark of that celestial fire
Which beams thro' nature's never-erring laws.

Pure is the pendent dew-drop on the thorn,
Whose little orb reflects the solar ray,
And sweet the breeze that wafts along the lawn--
The honied perfume of the new-mown hay.

Lo! now the cattle to the covert run,
To 'scape the insects of the noon-tide hour,
Wak'd into being by the blazing sun,
Whose beams are pregnant with creative pow'r;

And, hark! the birds attune their little throats,
Rapt with the genial glow diffus'd around;
Till on the bosom of the ether floats,
A mingled melody of ev'ry sound.

The cawing tenant of the nodding grove,
Rock'd by the wind upon her airy nest,
Broods o'er the pledges of instinctive love,
With all a parent's tenderness imprest.

Breathes there a being in the world's wide sphere,
  Howe'er distinguish'd or obscure its state,
But seen through some appropriate medium here,
  May smooth the rough asperities of fate.

By instinct blessing, or by instinct blest,
  Each still dependent on the whole appears;
But man, tho' deem'd superior to the rest,
  Forgets the relative degree he bears.

Ah! what advantage from *Reflection* springs,
  And why to him exclusively confin'd?
The native impulse of inferior things
  Exceeds his boasted faculty of mind!

Ere gath'ring clouds day's lovely face deform,
  And cross the welkin shoots the livid fire,
Th' instinctive bees foresee th' approaching storm,
  And homeward with their chymic spoils retire.

But why should they pursue their trackless way,
  And sip the fragrance of the new-blown flower?
Why from the gleanings of the Summer's day,
  Reserve sufficient for the wintry hour?

In vain they labor, and in vain they thrive,
In vain with wealth their waxen cells are stor'd;
Some wretch, ere long, will storm their humble hive,
And smother all, to steal their little hoard!

How strange! that beings of superior sense,
And form'd and fashion'd by divine command,
Should with each social tendency dispense,
And scourge creation with an iron hand!

Heart-rending anguish may perhaps befall
The wretch now dead to pity's soft control,
When wakeful memory shall the past recall,
And flash conviction on his trembling soul.

Then be it mine, to life's extremest date,
To keep the social sympathies in play,—
In full assurance of a happier state,
When all that's mortal shall have pass'd away.

C O L I N,

A DIRGE.

THE mate-widow'd Dove may complain,
But, alas! will complaining restore—
The pride of her bosom again,
Or the pleasure she felt heretofore?

Ah! no, she but sorrows in vain;
The blessing that death has remov'd,
She ne'er shall experience again,
Or know what it is to be lov'd!

If such be the hard-bearing fate
Of a guileless and innocent dove,
What language can picture the state
Of Colin, depriv'd of his love.

Alive to that delicate joy
  Which Sympathy only imparts,
Oh! why did death come to destroy
  The bond that united their hearts?

The wish that was cherish'd by one
  Was soon to the other made known;
For neither would selfishly run
  In search of a pleasure alone.

When prest by the evils of life,
  The burthen was equally borne;
The Husband would sigh for the Wife,
  The Wife for the Husband would mourn.

They thought, from the prospect in view,
  Which seem'd as if sanction'd above,
To have liv'd—and to blossom anew,
  In their sweet little pledges of love.

But vain are the hopes of us all;
  The hand that can tyrants enslave—
On prospects the fairest may fall,
  And spread round the Night of the Grave.

The scene was too pleasing to last,
And shown, but not suffer'd to stay,—
The moment 'twas felt—it was past,
And Phillis was beckon'd away.

No Spectre at midnight appear'd—
To tell us what fate had decreed;
The Red-breast* was all that we heard,
And sweetly he warbled indeed.

Yet know, from the regions above,
When stretch'd on her death--ridden bed,
Some Saint, in the form of a Dove
Whisper'd peace to her soul as it fled.

No fears robb'd her mind of repose,
For virtue has nothing to dread;—
She sigh'd, but 'twas only for those
That would want her when she should be dead.

* The Author would not wish to be thought superstitious, but the Red-breast's whistling at midnight, previous to the death of Phillis, and the Dove's cooing on the chimney leading to her apartment, immediately after her decease, are facts well known to many of her friends.

'Twas well—yet no harm shall befall—
Her babes in their innocent state;
But the fatherless Father of all
Protect them to life's latest date.

Hence Colin henceforth be content,
Nor fearfully think of to-morrow,
To-morrow perhaps may present—
A scene that shall soften thy sorrow

Ah! let not the soul-melting spell
Of affliction, all comfort repress,—
Nor suffer affection to dwell
Too long on the tale of distress.

Press the Angel of Hope to thy heart;
To fate's rigid will be resign'd;
And Time, hoary Time, shall impart
A balm to thy grief-smitten mind.

FINIS.

NORWICH; PRINTED BY J. PAYNE, MARKET-PLACE.